

**BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY
OF THE AIR FORCE**

AIR FORCE PAMPHLET 34-506

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Services

**MORTUARY SERVICES
ENTITLEMENTS FOR MEMBERS
WHO DIE WHILE ON ACTIVE DUTY**

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This pamphlet describes the various mortuary entitlements you may be eligible for upon your Death and includes a mortuary planning sheet for your use in making funeral prearrangements. In collaboration with the Chief of the Air Force Reserve (HQ USAF/RE) and the Director of the Air National Guard (NGB/CF), the Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel and Services (HQ USAF/A1) develops personnel policy for this program. Refer recommended changes and questions about this publication to the Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) using the AF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*; route AF Form 847s from the field through the appropriate functional's chain of command. This publication may be supplemented at any level, but all direct Supplements must be routed to the OPR of this publication for coordination prior to certification and approval. Ensure that all records created as a result of processes prescribed in this publication are maintained IAW Air Force Manual (AFMAN) 33-363, Management of Records, and disposed of IAW the Air Force Records Disposition Schedule (RDS) in the Air Force Records Information Management System (AFRIMS).

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

This revision includes Dignified Transfer and updated family travel eligibility for Dignified Transfers, installation memorial service, and funeral/burial.

1. Mortuary Services. In accordance with Titles 10 United States Code Section 1481, members who die while on active duty or inactive duty status are authorized certain mortuary entitlements. Recognizing honorable, faithful service given to our nation, the Air Force continues to care for its own and stands ready to assist and extend mortuary services entitlements to the extent possible as permitted by law. Following official notification, the person you have designated as

the person authorized to direct disposition (PADD), of your remains, will be briefed by a mortuary officer.

1.1. The PADD is the individual predetermined by you to direct disposition of your remains as indicated on DD Form 93, *Record of Emergency Data*, or virtual Record Emergency Data (vRED). If for any reason the PADD is not predetermined by you on DD Form 93 or vRED or if the PADD waives his/her right to direct disposition, this role will automatically fall upon the next of kin (NOK) based upon order of precedence delineated in Title 10 United States Code Section 1482.

2. Deaths Occurring in the United States Including Alaska and Hawaii.

2.1. When an active duty member dies and Air Force Casualty confirms that all notifications are complete, the mortuary officer nearest the place of death will brief the PADD and obtain disposition instructions by telephone or personal visit depending on the distance between the mortuary officer and the location of the PADD.

2.2. The mortuary officer is responsible for the search, recovery, and identification of remains; the care and handling of remains; assisting the PADD with disposition arrangements; transportation of the remains; providing an escort; arranging for military honors at the place of burial; and return of all personal effects and property to the person eligible to receive effects (PERE). Additionally, the mortuary officer or technician will arrange travel to and from the place of final disposition for all authorized travelers.

3. Deaths Occurring Outside the United States Excluding Alaska and Hawaii. When a death occurs Outside the Continental United States (OCONUS), the location of the PADD is the determining factor as to where the mortuary officer support will be assigned. Either the installation mortuary officer or a mortuary officer from the Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operation Center, Mortuary Affairs Division (AFMAO/MA) will brief the PADD and obtain their instructions for the disposition of the fallen.

3.1. Care and Return of Remains From OCONUS.

3.1.1. The Air Force and the other services operate mortuaries in certain overseas locations for deaths occurring in the geographic areas served by those mortuaries.

3.1.2. As soon as the overseas mortuary receives the fallen, they care for them as expeditiously as possible and promptly return them to the Continental United States (CONUS). However, when a death occurs overseas, there is a lapse of several days before the remains arrive at a CONUS port of entry, AFMAO Port Mortuary, Dover AFB, DE or receiving funeral home. There are several reasons for the lapse time:

3.1.2.1. Upon the death, local civil authorities may hold the remains for a period of at least a day or more for their investigative purposes and to provide the required documents to move the remains out of country.

3.1.2.2. When the host foreign nation or United States military medical authorities require an autopsy, this can take additional one or two days. This timeline can be extended due to national holidays or weekends, in which medical authorities may choose not to complete their investigation and release the fallen.

3.1.2.3. Transferring the remains to the responsible military mortuary and preparing (embalming) them for movement to CONUS usually takes 24 to 36 hours.

3.1.2.4. The overseas mortuary places the embalmed remains in an aluminum transfer case for transfer from the overseas mortuary to the CONUS port mortuary or a military specification casket for transfer directly to a receiving funeral home. The overseas mortuary arranges for the return of the remains to the United States on either the first available Air Mobility Command (AMC) aircraft bound for the CONUS port or on a commercial aircraft. The remains could leave the same day they are released by the mortuary or the next day, depending on the availability and scheduling of the aircraft. Therefore, another day's time is expended in the return of the remains. Weather or maintenance problems may provide additional delays.

3.2. CONUS Port Mortuary Operations.

3.2.1. Upon arrival at the port mortuary facility, the remains are processed or reprocessed and prepared for onward movement to final destination usually within a 48-hour period.

3.2.2. The port mortuary personnel perform the following actions:

3.2.2.1. Process or reprocess remains and administer additional treatment, to include wrapping non-viewable remains, performing restorative artwork, applying cosmetics, and dressing viewable remains.

3.2.2.2. Ensures the fallen is placed in the Armed Forces specification casket selected by the PADD, and encases the casket in an outer shipping container (air tray).

3.2.2.3. Brief the escort on his or her duties and provide proper documents. If an escort is not identified, the Port Mortuary will appoint one of equal or higher rank.

3.2.2.4. Prepare all necessary documents, permits and performs final quality assurance inspection prior to departure.

3.2.2.5. Schedules military/contract military air, commercial air, or hearse delivery to transport the remains and escort to the final destination.

3.2.3. When the PADD requests cremation, the mortuary officer will provide a cremation permit and the specification urn selected by the PADD.

3.3. Deaths Occuring in Combat Theater of Operations.

3.3.1. A Dignified Transfer (DT) will be held for service members who die in combat theaters of operation and whose remains are returning to the Port Mortuary, Dover AFB, DE. Additionally, the PNOK may elect to authorize media access to capture the DT at Dover AFB, DE. The Media Coverage can include DoD photography/videography coverage and/or public media or be limited to DoD coverage exclusively. The PNOK has the authority to exclude all media outlet coverage. AFI 36-3002, *Casualty Services*, provides specific guidelines in the DoD approved script for the PNOK to determine media access and other NOK afforded travel to witness the DT at Dover AFB, DE.

3.3.1.1. A General Officer from the fallen Airman's functional community will attend the DT at Dover AFB, DE. All eligible Service members will receive Military Funeral Honors in accordance with AFI 34-501.

4. Mortuary Services Entitlements.

4.1. When remains are recovered and individually identified, the PADD may direct the Air Force accomplish the following through its contract funeral home (or government operated overseas mortuary).

4.1.1. Remove the remains from the place of death or the place where authorities release the remains to the contract funeral home.

4.1.2. Prepare (embalming) the remains.

4.1.3. Wrap non-viewable remains and position remains and uniform in the casket or restore, cosmetize, dress, and casket viewable remains.

4.1.4. The PADD may select one of two Armed Services specification caskets.

4.1.4.1. An 18-gauge metal protective casket. The exterior is silver, silver tone or gray in color. The interior of the casket is equipped with an adjustable innerspring mattress, and the casket is upholstered with a white or eggshell crepe fabric.

4.1.4.2. A solid hardwood casket. The exterior is walnut in color. The interior of the casket is equipped with an adjustable innerspring mattress, and the casket is upholstered with a rose, tan or ecru crepe fabric.

4.1.5. Provide an outer shipping container (air tray) for the casket. This is to protect the casket while in transit. **NOTE:** The Air Force provides all items of service or merchandise listed above at no cost to the PADD.

4.2. If the PADD prefers to make his or her own arrangements for the above items, he or she may do so, but this alternative is generally limited to deaths occurring within the United States due to the complexity involved in the transportation of remain when outside the United States. The mortuary officer will provide the current monetary allowances for this option during the mortuary briefing.

4.2.1. The Air Force will reimburse the PADD up to the maximum authorized amount for Option 5, which includes all associated funeral and cemetery expenses.

4.2.2. In addition, the Air Force will reimburse all expenses for the transportation of remains.

5. Remains Disposition Options. The PADD may elect one of the following options. The mortuary officer provides monetary reimbursement allowances for each option in the entitlements briefing. The reimbursement amounts are not published due to continued adjustments in the entitlements. The mortuary officer will provide the current entitlements at the time of the PADD briefing.

5.1. Option 1. Consign the remains directly to a government cemetery. This means there would be no funeral home used and there would be no funeral service. Since there would be no expenses incurred at the government cemetery, the PADD is reimbursed a limited sum to help pay for an expense such as the purchase of a floral arrangement, acknowledgment cards, newspaper notice, and so forth.

5.2. Option 2. Consign the remains to a funeral home selected by the PADD to conduct desired visitations and services, followed by interment in a government cemetery. Since

expenses would be incurred with the funeral home, the PADD may be reimbursed a limited sum to help pay for expenses, such as the professional fee of a funeral director, use of the funeral home and equipment for a visitation and funeral service, motor vehicles (limousines, floral delivery vehicle, lead car, car for the clergy), purchase of a burial vault or grave liner, religious item for the casket, flowers, register book, prayer cards, acknowledgment cards, funeral programs, newspaper notice, clergy honorarium and music (organist, vocalist), and so forth.

5.3. Option 3. Consign the remains to a funeral home selected by the PADD to conduct desired visitations and services followed by interment in a non-government (private) cemetery. Since expenses would be incurred at both the funeral home and the cemetery, the PADD may be reimbursed a limited sum to help pay for expenses already specified in Option 2 and cemetery expenses such as purchase of a single grave space, outer burial container, opening and closing of the grave, use of cemetery equipment, purchase of a headstone from a commercial monument company, and so forth.

5.4. Option 4. Consign the fallen to a funeral home, selected by the PADD, to conduct desired arrangements that can include a visitation and services followed by cremation.

5.4.1. The fallen will be prepared and placed in a solid hardwood casket. The casket will be draped in a US Burial Flag and escorted to the receiving funeral home.

5.4.2. The receiving funeral home will perform the cremation in accordance with statutory provisions and the Air Force will assume the cost.

5.4.3. The Air Force provides the PADD a choice of two Armed Forces specification urns, a solid walnut urn or bronze urn. Each are cube-like in design with the US Air Force seal affixed and either will be engraved with the name, grade, date of birth, and date of death of the fallen.

5.4.3.1. The receiving funeral home will place the cremated remains in the urn selected by the next of kin.

6. Interment Flag(s) and Flag Case(s). A United States of America flag and a solid hardwood flag case will be presented to those listed in paragraphs 6.1 through 6.4 at the conclusion of the service.

6.1. Spouse

6.2. Children

6.3. The father and mother (if not the primary next of kin). If legally separated or divorced, each parent will receive a flag.

6.4. The PADD, if not already covered in paragraphs 6.1 through 6.3

7. Escort for the Remains.

7.1. Special Escort. The PADD may request, by name, a current serving member of the military from any branch of Service to be the “Special Escort”. A special escort can be requested for any scenario as long as time constraints, clearances, passports, etc. are in order.

7.2. Appointed Escort. When the PADD does not specifically request a military member by name to serve as the escort, the Mortuary Officer, in conjunction with the commander of the

unit of the deceased, will designate a military member of equal or higher rank than the decedent.

8. Military Honors.

8.1. Military funeral honors are furnished at the place of burial, if possible. For Active Duty decedants, military funeral honors consist of pallbearers, firing party, bugler, color guard, and an Air Force chaplain, if specifically requested by the PADD.

8.2. Flyover. If you are serving as a rated officer or enlisted aircrew member and hold an aeronautical rating on an active duty status, or pursuing a course of instruction leading to such a rating at the time of death, your PADD may request a flyover at the place of burial. The performance of a flyover depends on the availability of aircraft at the given time and date, minimum weather requirements, and approvals for the required air space.

9. Veterans Administration Benefits.

9.1. The Veterans Administration will provide a government headstone free of cost to mark the grave. The type and style of headstone depends on the requirement or restrictions specified by the cemetery concerned.

9.2. Veterans may be interred in a national cemetery. A veteran's spouse and dependent children may also be buried in the same grave site. The mortuary officer will discuss the limitations in detail during the PADD briefing.

10. Family Travel.

10.1. Installation Memorial Service and Funeral/Burial. Authorized travelers to include spouse, dependent children (natural, step, adopted), parents (natural, step, adopted), siblings of the deceased (natural, half, adopted), and the PADD, if different from those listed above, may receive round-trip travel at Air Force expense to attend the funeral. The mortuary officer or technician will assist the travelers in making proper travel arrangements. Following travel, the mortuary technician will help the authorized travelers complete and submit a travel voucher for payment of limited per diem.

10.2. Dignified Transfer (DT). The PNOK will determine if family will attend the DT upon the arrival of a fallen Airman whose remains are returned through Dover AFB, DE, from Combat Theaters of Operation. The travel entitlement is determined by the PNOK and includes (2) additional family members.

11. Disposition of Personal Property. The Mortuary Officer will request the Installation Commander appoint a Summary Courts Officer to carry out duties IAW AFI 34-511 and assist the Person Eligible to Receive Effects (PERE) with disposition of the personal property and effects of the decedent. The family structure of the deceased and marital status at the time of death are governing factors in applying the law as to who is the recipient for the property.

12. Death Certificate.

12.1. For deaths occurring in the United States, the Primary Next of Kin (PNOK) will be provided ten (10) copies of a certified state death certificate. Additional copies may be provided at the PNOK's expense. The contract funeral home will obtain death certificates as part of their contractual requirements. Families may contact the Office of Vital Statistics in the county where the death occurred should additional copies be needed in the future.

12.2. For deaths occurring outside the United States and its territories, the PNOK will be provided ten (10) copies of the DD 1300, *Report of Casualty* and/or certified copies of the DD 2064, *Certificate of Death* (Overseas). The DD 1300 may be used in lieu of a death certificate when proof of death is established and no remains are recovered. The State Department may also issue a Report of Death Abroad for unique circumstances.

13. Available Entitlements When Remains Are Recovered But Cannot Be Individually Identified by Scientific Means (Group Burial). This circumstance requires the Air Force to arrange and effect a group burial for those remains that are not individually identified. The Air Force will do the following:

13.1. Casket remains in specification metal protective caskets. The number of caskets is predicated on the volume of remains, not the number of persons included in the group burial.

13.2. Arrange the interment to be effected in Arlington National Cemetery.

13.3. Arrange and pay for the round trip travel of authorized travelers as described by paragraph 10.2 to attend the funeral.

13.4. Assign an escort to accompany each casket that will be used.

13.5. Conducts a nondenominational interment service.

13.6. Provide full military honors. Details pertaining to military honors are contained in paragraph 8.1

13.7. A United States burial flag will drape the group casket. It will be folded at the completion of the military funeral honors. This flag will not be presented but retained by the Air Force. United States burial flag(s) will be presented to those delineated in paragraphs 6.1 through 6.4 unless an individual burial has already been conducted. In that case, only the PNOK, for each fallen Airman, will be presented a flag and flag case.

13.8. Provide a specially fabricated headstone to mark the group burial site.

13.9. Provide each PADD with a specified allowance to help pay limited expenses that may be incurred for the interment service. This may be for the purchase of a floral arrangement, acknowledgment cards, etc.

13.10. Return personal property and effects to the authorized recipient, as specified by law.

14. Available Entitlements When Remains Are Not Recovered (BNR). This situation may be due to the type of incident that occurred or prevailing conditions at the scene, rendering the remains non-recoverable. Whatever the case, this circumstance precludes any funeral service and disposition of remains, so the Air Force will assist the PADD in arranging a memorial service, to honor the sacrifice of the fallen, with Air Force participation.

14.1. Memorial Service. The memorial service may be conducted at a place selected by the PADD to include a place of worship, a funeral home, a cemetery (national or private), or a combination thereof.

14.1.1. Military honors will be provided at the place of service. The extent of those honors depends on the PADD's desires. If the deceased held an aeronautical rating or meets criteria outlined in paragraph . the PADD may request a flyover.

14.1.2. At the conclusion of the service, a flag of the United States of America and a flag case is presented to those delineated in paragraphs [6.1](#) through [6.4](#)

14.2. Funeral Travel. Round trip travel will be provided at Air Force expense to attend the memorial service arranged by the PADD. Travel is authorized for those individuals described in paragraph [10.2](#)

14.3. Memorial Marker. The Veterans Administration provides a memorial marker which may be placed in a national cemetery or private cemetery.

14.4. Memorial Service Allowance. The Air Force will provide the PADD reimbursement for a memorial service to help pay for expenses not to exceed the amount allowed for a funeral with subsequent interment in a government cemetery.

14.5. Personal Property. The Air Force will return personal effects and property to the authorized recipient as specified by law.

15. Future Planning. A “Mortuary Planning Sheet for Active Duty Air Force Members.” is provided in [Attachment 2](#). This guide is designed to alleviate undue burden on your family members should you become a casualty. Take the time to carefully review the information and complete the attachment. Provide copies of your expressed wishes contained within this attachment to your family members. Questions concerning entitlements or discussions about mortuary matters can be answered by the installation mortuary officer.

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Attachment 1

GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

References

AFMAN 33-363, *Management of Records*, 1 March 2008

Adopted Forms

DD Form 93, *Record of Emergency Data*

DD 2064, *Certificate of Death*

DD 1300, *Report of Casualty*

AF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AFMAO—Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations

CONUS—Continental United States

FSS—Force Support Squadron

NOK—Next of Kin

OCONUS—Outside the Continental United States **PADD**—Person Authorized to Direct Disposition

PERE—Person Eligible to Receive Effects

PNOK—Primary Next of Kin

RDS—Records Disposition Schedule

RNR—Remains not Recovered

vRED—Virtual Record of Emergency Data

Terms

Next of Kin (NOK)—The decedent's family members who may include spouse (if married), children, parents, brothers and sisters.

Person Authorized to Direct Disposition (PADD)—In accordance with Federal law the PADD is the person authorized to direct disposition of the remains that was designated by the deceased member.

Person Eligible to Receive Effects (PERE)—A prioritized list of persons authorized to accept personal property and effects from Air Force officials, includes surviving spouse, children, parents, siblings, etc.

Primary Next-of-Kin (PNOK)—The person most closely related to the deceased individual.

Attachment 2

MORTUARY PLANNING SHEET FOR ACTIVE DUTY AIR FORCE MEMBERS**Figure A2.1. Mortuary Planning Sheet for Active Duty Air Force Members**

TO THE NEXT OF KIN OF: _____

This is not intended as a legal or binding document. It is only an expression of my preferences and desires regarding the disposition of my remains upon my death. Please recognize that this was done primarily to make things easier for you and let you know my thoughts.

A2.1. At the time of my death, I prefer (Circle One):

GROUND BURIAL

CREMATION

A2.2. I feel it would be best if preparation, casketing, and transportation were arranged and handled by (Circle One):

THE AIR FORCE

MY PERSON AUTHORIZED TO DIRECT DISPOSITION (PADD)

A2.3. Casket selection if A.1. selection is ground burial (Circle One):

18 GAUGE METAL CASKET

SOLID HARDWOOD CASKET

A2.4. Urn selection if A.1. selection is cremation (Circle One):

SOLID BRONZE URN

SOLID WALNUT URN

A2.5. My cemetery preference is (Circle One):

PRIVATE CEMETERY

GOVERNMENT CEMETERY

CEMETERY NAME/LOCATION: _____

A2.6. If I chose cremation in A.1., I wish my cremated remains to be (Select One):

BURIED IN THE CEMETERY LISTED IN A2.5.

PLACED IN A COLUMBARIUM AT THE CEMETERY LISTED IN A2.5.

RETAIN MY URN AT HOME

SCATTER MY CREMATED REMAINS AT: _____

A2.7. My remains should be consigned to the funeral home designated below for services prior to interment or cremation:

FUNERAL HOME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

A2.8. My preference for an escort would be:

NAME/RANK/BRANCH of SERVICE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

A2.9. Clothing to be dressed in (Circle One):

SERVICE DRESS UNIFORM

FLIGHT SUIT (If authorized) APPROPRIATE

CIVILIAN ATTIRE

A.1.10. Outer Burial Container at private cemetery (Circle One):

*Some cemeteries require the use of a vault

VAULT GRAVE

LINER

NONE OR NO PREFERENCE

A2.11. Type of Funeral Service(s) I desire: (More than one may be marked)

PLACE OF WORSHIP NAME: _____
FUNERAL HOME CHAPEL LISTED A7.

GRAVESIDE AT CEMETERY LISTED A5.

OTHER: _____

NO PREFERENCE

A2.12. (Circle One) I DO/DO NOT wish to have the Military Honors at my service.

A2.13. (Circle One) I DO/DO NOT wish to have Air Force Chaplain at my service.

A2.14. (Circle One) I DO/DO NOT wish to have a flyover, if I am eligible (see paragraph 8.2)

A2.15. (Circle One) I DO/DO NOT wish to have a government furnished marker.

A2.16. My preference of Music and Readings: _____

A2.17. My preference for flowers, memorial or charitable contributions in my memory:

A2.18. Individuals I wish to be present or take part in my service:

MEMBER NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: DATE: _____

WITNESS NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: DATE: _____